

LADIES FRIENDSHIP CONNECTION

LESSON SIX: ARMOR OF GOD

by Sandy Harber

"Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." Ephesians 6:13

Read Ephesians 6:10-18.

We are all warrior women. Soldiers in the Army of God. But, unlike American soldiers who volunteer to serve our country, we are part of the conflict whether we "volunteer" or not. Our enemy - God's enemy - brings the battle to us. He shoots those fiery darts at every believer. You can refuse to take the protections God gives - His armor. You can refuse to fight and be easily defeated. You can be oblivious to what's happening, not recognizing that you are under spiritual attack by a powerful enemy who has a sophisticated organization of highly intelligent, hateful, and evil fallen angels at his command. Satan's soldiers work against us, attacking where we are weakest. It's important that we understand the nature of the conflict and what we can do to be victorious. God's soldier has three duties: 1) put on the armor; 2) withstand the enemy; and, 3) stand your ground.

"Put on the whole armor of God," Paul said. If you leave out a piece of armor some part of you is left unprotected. You need it all if you want to resist the enemy and hold your ground. God is the source of the armor. Take what He has provided for your protection and success as a victorious combatant for Christ. Clothe yourself in truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, and God's Word. "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ," Paul told the Romans (Romans 13:14). Jesus is the personification of God's armor. He is truth, righteousness, peace, trustworthiness, salvation, and the Word of God.

God's soldier puts on the **belt of truth** (Ephesians 6:14) first because the rest of the armor is dependent on it. Salvation only occurs when you place your faith in the truth. The Sword of the Spirit is the truth in written form.

The **breastplate of righteousness** (Ephesians 6:14) protects the heart, the emotions, which is one of our most vulnerable areas. Righteousness refers to moral conduct and holy character. Satan's goal is to tempt the soldier to transgress or abandon morality.

The **feet are shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace** (Ephesians 6:15), which is the good news that we are right with God because of Jesus' sacrifice. The peace that Christ promised His soldiers is beyond earthly understanding (John 14:27; Philippians 4:7). It's the reason the soldier can be calm and fearless, able to face the enemy confidently.

Most importantly ("above all") God's soldier wields **the shield of faith** (Ephesians 6:16), which can be moved into position wherever it is needed to deflect the enemy's fiery darts. Faith is, quite simply, trust. Trust in God and His promises. Trust in the truth. In battle, soldiers would sometimes stand shoulder to shoulder holding their shields in front of them while a line of soldiers knelt in front of them also holding their shields creating a wall of protection. A barrage of fiery darts cannot penetrate the shields. This is why believers gather together in the local church. The faith of God's people united in prayer can defeat the enemy.

The **helmet of salvation** (Ephesians 6:17) protects the mind, the intellect from "philosophies and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world" (Colossians 2:8).

The soldier's only offensive weapon is **the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God** (Ephesians 6:17). He can use it to counter Satan's attacks, as Jesus did when He was tempted (Matthew 4:4, 7, 10). He can also use it to capture more of the enemy's territory by witnessing to the unsaved and, potentially, winning them over to God's side.

God's soldier has one more weapon: **prayer** (Ephesians 6:18). Armor alone will not protect you. You need to be in constant communication with your Commander. He will tell you what to do, when and how to do it. He may send in reinforcements to help you. He may even intervene Himself.

Once you are clothed in the armor of God you are ready to withstand the enemy. "Withstand" means "to stand against; oppose; resist." James 4:7 tells us to "submit yourselves therefore to God, resist the devil, and he will flee from you." Resisting the devil only works if you have submitted to God first. Subordinate yourself to God. Let Him be in charge - He's the General. He gives the orders. You are the soldier, the one who obeys the orders. An army is a unit that follows one battle plan devised by the Commander-in-chief. Resistance means you are actively fighting back, not giving in or giving up. When the devil launches those fiery darts of temptation, lies, deceit, doubt, depression, fear, anxiety, etc. you respond with the sword of God's Word, holding your faith shield aloft, and keep in touch with headquarters by prayer. Trust in your armor to catch any darts that get past your shield. God promises that if you resist the enemy will flee. Oh, he'll come back again and again, but you can send him packing again and again if you are fully clothed and resisting with truth (God's Word), faith, and prayer. Paul says to withstand in the "evil day." The term "evil" here denotes "toilsome, painful, labor, pain, sorrow." These are the times when we are at our weakest, when we are distracted by difficulties we are facing. These are the times when it's easiest to think God has deserted me, my prayers aren't being answered, and I'm alone. These are the times when we become an easy target for those fiery darts. Resist. Fight back with your sword. God's Word has wisdom and comfort and guidance to get you through the worst of times.

You have put on the armor and you have resisted the enemy. Now all you have to do is stand your ground. You are not commanded to attack the enemy or to advance on him, just stay where God has planted you and don't move. If you turn and run away you are unprotected. There is no armor provided for a retreating soldier. As long as you face the enemy you are covered. Roman soldiers wore special boots with nails in them that gripped the ground. It kept them surefooted, upright, and steady. We stand on the good news that because of Jesus' sacrifice believers are at peace with God. God's soldier holds his ground calmly and fearlessly because he has faith in the truth and is emotionally and intellectually protected from the enemy's attacks by maintaining righteousness and knowledge of salvation. The war has already been won. "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 15:57).